



More than 500 federal and contractor employees attended DOE's 2008 Integrated Safety Management Workshop, which was held in Idaho Falls this year.

DOE annual integrated safety workshop at INL -- safety is an enabler for mission success

by John Walsh, *INL Communications*

"Complacency is safety's enemy," DOE Acting Deputy Secretary Jeffrey Kupfer declared at the 2008 Integrated Safety Management Workshop in Idaho Falls. "Safety isn't an afterthought, something you're supposed to do after you finish all other parts of projects."

"Safety is an enabler to complete our missions. I'm pleased to see the strong level of participation from throughout the DOE community and its contractors."

More than 500 federal and contractor employees attended the DOE workshop the last week of August. The theme, ISM - Building Mission Success, was chosen to emphasize the critical importance of worker safety and environmental responsibility in enabling the DOE and its contractors to safely accomplish their missions in energy and science research, national security, and environmental protection and cleanup.

The program drew strong representation from DOE officials in Washington, D.C. Besides Kupfer, William Ostendorff, principal deputy administrator for the National Nuclear Security Administration, Shane Johnson, principal deputy assistant secretary for Nuclear Energy, and Glenn Podonsky, chief health, safety and security officer, all addressed the workshop during its opening session.

Senior officials of several DOE contractors participated in panel discussions and breakout sessions.

"Today, the public is beginning to re-embrace nuclear power as a source of clean power," Kupfer said. "Scientists, engineers and technicians here at INL are poised to play a new role in this resurgence. As we explore options with our industry partners to revitalize the nation's nuclear research and development needs, we must develop these plans with safety as an integral component. INL will be held to a particularly high standard of safety performance...and I'm confident Idaho is up to this challenge."



DOE Acting Deputy Secretary Jeffrey Kupfer during a tour of INL facilities.

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Johnson noted that DOE-Idaho Operations Manager Elizabeth Sellers aggressively worked to be host of the workshop ... "ensuring this conference came to Idaho Falls so that we could showcase the new Idaho National Laboratory. The nuclear renaissance has started. Idaho National Laboratory is our new nuclear laboratory and, as such, it has a great responsibility in helping us carry our nuclear development activities."

"As we pursue our nuclear research and development program, it is critical that our work is done safely," Johnson said. "There's an old saying in the commercial nuclear arena: 'An accident anywhere is an accident everywhere.' So, we do have to ensure a safe, secure workplace."

Ostendorff said a particular safety challenge to DOE and to the National Nuclear Security Administration is that these organizations have large, complex construction projects in various stages of planning and construction.

"All of these projects are large, one-of-a-kind nuclear facilities with no nuclear commercial counterparts to provide lessons learned," he said.

"Often, a building we are constructing is the only one (like it) that has been built. This presents significant safety challenges. This challenge demands excellent and constant vigilance from all of us."

All the speakers emphasized that worker involvement is a key element of a safety culture.

John Grossenbacher, director of Idaho National Laboratory, noted that the laboratory's approach to safety stresses employee involvement. INL's safety program includes:

- behavior-based training and the Safety Observations Achieve Results program (employees observing fellow employees' behaviors and work activities, noting both safe and unsafe actions and providing feedback to promote safe behavior)
- human performance evaluation
- fitness for duty considerations (looking at the age and physical fitness of employees that might impact their being able to perform certain duties)
- safety 24/7 (encouraging employees not to leave safety at the job but practice safety at home and involve family members)
- demonstrating and practicing strong leadership and management commitment.



ISM workshop speakers donning safety hard hats.

The workshop ran four days and included tours of INL research facilities and cleanup projects on the desert Site, and numerous breakout sessions. Topics covered human performance, integrated management for mission success, safety culture, work planning and control, feedback and improvement and contract transition.

The DOE committed in 1996 to making the Integrated Safety Management System (ISMS) the tool the Department and its contractors would use to ensure that work is planned and accomplished safely and in a cost-effective manner. The system incorporates safety into management and work practices at all levels, using the five core functions of ISMS: define work, analyze hazards, develop controls, perform work and provide feedback.



Idaho National Laboratory Director John Grossenbacher addressing ISM workshop participants.

The workshop was a venue for the federal and contractor participants to share advances and experiences in integrating the various aspects of safety, environmental protection, security and other relevant management systems to ensure continued mission success.

The success of the program complexwide is reflected in a 40 percent drop between 2001 and 2007 in the frequency and severity of occupational injuries (total recordable cases rate and days away, restricted or transferred rates). In fact, DOE occupational injury rates are lower than similar industries, such as the chemical industry and heavy construction.

The continued implementation of ISM at INL among all the contractors has resulted in a 25 percent reduction in the occupational injury rate over the past five years.

Podonsky concluded, "Safety goes to the bottom line of every successful corporation. Safety and security management allows good corporations to become great ones, and our goal is to become one of the great (ones)."

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